

AMENDED CLAIMS

1-36 (canceled).

37 (new). A device to assist in the training of athletes and the playing of athletic games, the device comprising:

- a case;
- a first plurality of signaling elements for emitting a first signal, said first plurality of signaling elements being disposed on an outer surface of the case, wherein each element has an on state in which it emits the first signal, and an off state in which it does not emit the first signal;
- a second plurality of signaling elements for emitting a second signal, said second signal being distinguishable from the first signal, said second plurality of signaling elements being disposed on an outer surface of the case, wherein each element has an on state in which it emits the second signal, and an off state in which it does not emit the second signal;
- a controller for driving said signaling elements, wherein said controller is disposed within the case, wherein said controller drives said signaling elements to produce a sequence of signals that is unpredictable;

whereby variation is introduced into the training of athletes and the playing of athletic games.

38 (new). A device according to claim 37, wherein the case is made of a durable material appropriate for use in an athletic activity.

39 (new). A device according to claim **37**, wherein the case is conical.

40 (new). A device according to claim **37**, wherein the first and second pluralities of signal emitting elements are disposed in rings around the outer surface of the case.

41 (new). A device according to claim **37**, wherein the first signal is a light of a first color, and the second signal is a light of a second color.

42 (new). A device according to claim **37**, wherein the first and second pluralities of signaling elements are LEDs.

43 (new). A device according to claim **37**, wherein power is supplied by a removable battery.

44 (new). A device according to claim **37**, wherein the controller comprises a microprocessor.

45 (new). A device according to claim **37**, wherein combinations of the first signal and the second signal define a set of device states, and wherein the controller drives the first plurality of signaling elements and the second plurality of signaling elements to produce an unpredictable sequence of said device states.

46 (new). A device according to claim **45**, wherein a dial sets the mean frequency of transitions between device states.

47 (new). A device according to claim **45**, wherein a dial sets the minimum hold time spent in each device state before a transition is permitted.

48 (new). A device according to claim **45**, wherein a switch sets the order of transitions between device states as sequential or random.

49 (new). A device according to claim **45**, wherein a switch sets the rate of transitions between device states to be either fixed or randomly varying around a mean frequency.

50 (new). A device according to claim **45**, wherein an occupancy value is set for each device state, said occupancy values determining the average time spent in each device state.

51 (new). A device according to claim **45**, wherein the combinations of the first signal and the second signal define four device states, each of said device states representing a different action to be taken by the athletes.

52 (new). A method for the training of athletes and the playing of athletic games comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a controlling means, wherein said controlling means exists at any given time is in one of a plurality of device states, wherein over time said controlling means transitions between said device states;
- (b) providing a setting means, wherein said controlling means periodically reads from said setting means those parameters which determine the order and timing of transitions of said controlling means between said device states, wherein said parameters result in said controlling means making a sequence of transitions between said device states which is at least partly random in order or timing;
- (c) providing a signaling means, wherein said signaling means is driven by said controlling means, wherein said signaling means may produce a plurality of

distinguishable signals corresponding one to one to said plurality of device states, wherein said signaling means produces at each moment in time a signal from said plurality of distinguishable signals which corresponds to that device state in which said controlling means currently exists, wherein said signal is unpredictable by an observer;

whereby allowing athletes to associate said plurality of distinguishable signals one to one with an equal numbered plurality of actions appropriate within the context of athletic training or the playing of athletic games, thus introducing unpredictable variation into athletic training or the playing of athletic games.

53 (new). A method according to claim **52**, wherein the controlling means comprises a microprocessor, wherein the setting means comprises dials and switches, wherein the signaling means comprises a set of red LEDs and a set of blue LEDs, wherein said signaling means is capable of producing four distinct signals corresponding to all four combinations of said red LEDs and said blue LEDs when on or off, wherein said controlling means exists in one of four device states corresponding one to one with said four distinct signals, wherein said controlling means transitions between said four device states, wherein the parameters affecting the order and timing of said transitions are determined by said dials and switches of said setting means, wherein said parameters direct that the order and timing of said transitions between said four device states is at least partially random, wherein a resulting sequence of device states in which said controlling means exists is unpredictable, wherein a corresponding

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sequence of signals produced by said signaling means is correspondingly
unpredictable, whereby athletes may be directed to perform an unpredictable sequence
of four distinct actions by a corresponding unpredictable sequence of four distinct
signals.